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BRITISH GUIANA.

By Consul George E. Chamberlin, Georgetown, March 24.

The general business conditions in British Guiana during the first seven months of 1914 were practically normal. Merchants enjoyed a satisfactory trade in all lines, the state of the money market was good, and the crop outlook bright, assuring increased exports in many of the principal products. The European war has affected the situation both favorably and unfavorably. Agriculturists engaged in the sugar and rice industries have reaped a benefit, while general merchants have been adversely affected, owing to a decline in their trade to a certain extent through the natural tendency of the public to curtail their expenditures so much as possible, owing to unsettled conditions.

Financial Conditions the Last Part of the Year.

There were no important failures during last year. On November 23 the Government guaranteed to the Royal Bank of Canada an advance of $75,000 to the Consolidated Rubber & Balata Co. (Ltd.), one of the largest concerns in the colony engaged in this industry, to assist it in the crisis caused by the war.

In August the banks advanced their rates to 8 per cent on commercial transactions and to 10 per cent on extended credits. A reduction was soon made to the former regular rate of 6 per cent on commercial loans. The rate for extended credits, however, was only reduced to 8 per cent, or 2 per cent above normal. The local banks have been able to finance all foreign business offered, exchange fluctuating in sympathy with the New York and London rates. At the close of the year the bankers reported that customers met their obligations in the usual manner.

Rainfall—Sugar Cultivation and Rum Exports.

The year opened unfavorably for agriculture, but 7 inches of rain falling during the first three months. From April conditions improved, the rainfall for the year being 71½ inches, well distributed throughout the remaining nine months, and resulting in good crops.

Sugar, by far the most important output of the colony, showed an increase of 18,722 tons in production over the preceding year, the exports being 103,773 tons. The consumption of sugar in the colony is estimated at 8,000 to 10,000 tons. The local market opened in January with dark crystals for home consumption at $2 per 100 pounds. The price advanced steadily reaching $2.50 in July, $3.50 in August and September, and from $3.50 to $3.80 per 100 pounds for the remainder of the year. The increase in price and in quantity

produced will result in a gain to the sugar-estate owners of approximately $2,500,000 over the year 1913.

The area under cane cultivation in 1914 was 71,283 acres, and sugar was manufactured on 37 estates, the largest of which contains 7,443 acres.

Rum exports amounted to 3,403,845 gallons, against 3,253,653 gallons during 1913. The price of this product also advanced during the last four months of the year and the value of the total export will show a substantial increase.

Development of Rice Industry—Coconut Raising.

The coast lands of the colony are flat, easily irrigated, and well adapted to the raising of rice. This product is becoming one of the important exports and the industry is capable of great development. There were 15,823,743 pounds of rice exported in 1914, or 745,755 pounds less than during the previous year. The decrease was due to the prohibition of its exportation by the Government rather than to a decline in production. The prohibition has since been removed, subject to certain restrictions. With the exception of the Abary plantations, an American concern, the industry is largely carried on by East Indians on small holdings.

Considerable attention is now being given to the raising of coconuts, the production for 1914 being 1,889,921 nuts and 189,354 pounds of copra, as compared with 875,595 nuts and 126,274 pounds of copra for 1913. When the area now planted comes into full bearing, the production will, it is estimated, be in the neighborhood of 25,000,000 nuts per annum.

Coffee and Lime Exports—Rubber Cultivation.

The coffee and lime industries are also receiving consideration. The exports of the former increased from 89,342 pounds in 1913 to 238,767 pounds last year, and citrate of lime from 3,564 to 11,091 pounds.

It is reckoned that there were over 4,200 acres under rubber cultivation in British Guiana at the end of the year, chiefly *Hevea Braziliensis*. The exports were 1,107 pounds as compared with 690 pounds in 1913. The climate and soil are well adapted for this industry, and the experiments in tapping carried on by the Government show results equal, and in some cases superior, to those obtained in the Far East. Large areas are available for rubber planting.

The balata industry experienced an unsatisfactory year owing to low prices and, after the commencement of the war, the lack of a market. The production was fully equal to that of the preceding year, but the exports were only 1,022,751 pounds, compared with 1,321,065 pound in 1913. The quantity carried over is estimated at over 350,000 pounds. Owing to this condition the output for 1915 will be considerably curtailed.

Output of Gold, Diamonds, and Bauxite—Lumber Exports.

The production of gold during 1914 was 63,425 ounces, valued at $1,106,783 as compared with 79,173 ounces, valued at $1,378,978 in 1913. About one-sixth of this was secured by dredging and the remainder by placer washings. Quartz and hydraulic mining have been practically at a standstill. The largest production was in the Cuyuni district, where the output was over 28,200 ounces. The production in the Mazaruni district was 16,400 ounces; the Potaro district, 14,800 ounces; and Barima district, 10,700 ounces.

The output of diamonds was largely increased during the first seven months of the year, but after August 1 the market for these stones collapsed and operations were discontinued. The total exports for the year were 9,582 carats, valued at $86,497 as compared with 7,217 carats, valued at $66,781 in 1913.

Deposits of bauxite on the Demerara River above Wismar have been investigated and found to be of considerable importance. Much activity has been in evidence in purchasing the property and securing leases of the Crown lands where the deposits are located. It is believed that operations will soon commence and that shipments to the United States will be undertaken during 1915.

The lumber industry has been handicapped through the lack of shipping facilities, especially during the latter part of the year, consequently shipments were about one-half of those of the previous year. The exports were 251,250 feet of lumber and 212,418 cubic feet of timber. Unfilled orders nearly equal to the above were on hand at the close of 1914.

Exports from the Colony.

The following comparative statement shows the quantity of exports from British Guiana during 1913 and 1914:

Articles.	1913	1914	Articles.	1913	1914
Balata.....pounds..	1,321,065	1,022,751	Lime, citrate of.....pounds..	3,564	11,091
Cattle.....head..	884	1,145	Lumber and timber:		
Charcoal.....bags..	61,821	67,450	Lumber.....feet..	515,383	251,250
Coconuts.....number..	875,595	1,889,921	Timber.....cubic feet..	437,111	212,418
Cocoa.....pounds..	56,565	49,857	Firewood.....tons..	8,620	10,204
Coffee.....do.....	89,342	238,767	Molascuit.....tons..	6,816	2,371
Copra.....do.....	126,274	189,354	Molasses.....gallons..	117,168	83,197
Diamonds.....carats..	7,217	9,582	Pigs.....number..	1,460	1,303
Diamonds.....value..	$66,781	$86,497	Railway sleepers.....do....	11,020	10,627
Fish glue.....pounds..	15,197	11,861	Rice meal.....tons..	1,803	238
Gold.....ounces..	79,173	63,425	Rice.....pounds..	16,569,498	15,823,743
Gold.....value...	$1,378,978	$1,106,783	Rubber.....do....	600	1,107
Gums.....pounds..	2,237	886	Rum.....proof galls..	3,253,653	3,403,845
Hides.....number..	5,106	4,490	Sheep.....number..	22	141
Kola nuts.....pounds..	200	480	Shingles.....do....	2,645,550	1,806,550
Leather.....do.....	3,790	7,295	Sugar.....tons..	85,051	103,773

Destination of Exports.

The destination of the exports for last year was as follows, according to customs statistics:

Articles and countries of destination.	Quantity.	Articles and countries of destination.	Quantity.
Balata:		Rum:	
United Kingdom.....pounds..	873,794	United Kingdom.....gallons..	3,129,502
United States.....do....	148,957	Canada.....do....	127,272
Coconuts:		British West Indies.....do....	48,594
United States.....number..	1,059,565	Dutch Guiana.....do....	2
Canada.....do....	586,410	Sugar:	
British West Indies.....do....	200,655	Canada.....tons..	50,000
United Kingdom.....do....	41,250	United Kingdom.....do....	48,797
Copra:		United States.....do....	2,735
United Kingdom.....pounds..	189,150	Dutch Guiana.....do....	45
British West Indies.....do....	224	British West Indies.....do....	5
Lumber:		Timber:	
United Kingdom.....feet..	147,715	United Kingdom.....cubic feet..	186,082
United States.....do....	52,068	British West Indies.....do....	8,666
British West Indies.....do....	29,000	Canada.....do....	2,231
Canada.....do....	6,602	United States.....do....	922
Rice:		Dutch Guiana.....do....	321
British West Indies.....pounds..	14,343,187	Other countries.....do....	19,196
United Kingdom.....do....	21,188		
United States.....do....	848		
Canada.....do....	189		

Exports to United States.

The exports to the United States during 1914, according to invoices certified at the consulate at Georgetown, were valued at $259,564, compared with $115,275 for 1913. This large increase was doubtless due principally to the European war, as with the exception of coconuts and rice the increased shipments took place during the last quarter of the year, when the exports amounted to $176,394, compared with $37,558 for the corresponding period in 1913. Only the values are given for 1913, while both quantities and values are given for 1914.

Articles.	1913	1914		Articles.	1913	1914	
	Values.	Quantities.	Values.		Values.	Quantities.	Values.
Art, works of			$1,739	Household effects	$254		
Balata..pounds..	$90,707	254,788	123,977	Office archives	500		
Coconuts, number	10,319	1,099,915	22,231	Rice....pounds..	23	637,910	$12,000
Coconut oil, pounds		3,828	243	Rope.....do		9,337	263
Coffee...pounds..	15	1,173	153	Rum....gallons..		515	223
Copra.....do	449			Sugar...pounds..	253	2,274,336	69,791
Diamonds,carats		17⅓	347	Timber, cubic fect	12,005	5,097	5,194
Flour....barrels..		69	313	All other articles.	750		
Gold.....ounces..		2,026	19,506	Total	115,275		259,564
Hides			3,584				

In addition to the above there was shipped to New York in transit to Canada sugar to the value of $284,601 in 1913 and $86,420 in 1914; also 1,647 gallons of rum, valued at $755, in 1914.

Imports from United States.

Statistics showing the imports into British Guiana for 1914 are not yet available. Of the total imports into the colony for 1913, valued at $7,750,988, the United States furnished articles valued at $1,810,360; the United Kingdom, $4,353,822; and Canada, $692,628. The principal articles making up the total from the United States were flour, $364,055; pickled beef and pork, $320,297; oils, $217,338; staves and headings, $72,077; coal, $59,595; textile goods, $54,966; lumber, $46,231; lard, $36,988; and shooks, $22,917.

Stocks and Prices of Provisions.

Stocks at the end of the year in all lines were practically normal.

Since August prices on food supplies have advanced in the local market, increasing the cost of living about 10 per cent. The following figures represent the retail prices per pound of various provisions in July and December:

Article.	July.	December.	Article.	July.	December.
	Cents.	*Cents.*		*Cents.*	*Cents.*
Beef:			Mutton	24	24
Fresh	12	14	Pork, salt	14	16
Salt	14	16	Sugar:		
Bacon	36	38	Granulated	5½	8
Butter, best English	48	52	Dark crystals	3	4
Flour, best	4½ to 5	6	Yellow crystals	3½	4½
Ham	40	40	Rice	3 to 3½	3 to 3½

The export price of rice has advanced somewhat, but owing to the fact that the product is the chief article of food among the native

and East Indian population the Government restricted exportation and the price at which it must be sold for local consumption.

Steamship Service.

There has been no interruption in the steamship service between Georgetown and United States ports as a result of the war. The Quebec Steamship Co. (Ltd.) and the Trinidad Shipping & Trading Co. (Ltd.) are operating their steamers between New York and Georgetown via the West Indies, the latter vessels calling at Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana. Their sailings are from 10 days to 2 weeks. The Seeberg Line steamers from Mobile and other Gulf ports visit this port every 6 weeks. The Royal Dutch West Indian Mail, bound from Amsterdam to New York, call at Georgetown for freight and passengers on their outward voyage only.

In addition to the above the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. operates a biweekly service between Halifax and this port, also a similar service between England and Georgetown. Other foreign services are the Booker Bros. Line and the Direct Line Joint Cargo Service to English ports, the East Asiatic Co. to Denmark, and the French Mail service to France. With the exception of slight changes in the Royal Mail service to England, all of the above lines continued their regular service throughout the year.

On July 2 the Government put six steamers into the colonial coastwise and river service on runs formerly operated by Messrs. Sprostons (Ltd.), of Georgetown, under a subsidy. The placing of the Government steamers in the service has resulted in reducing the subsidy from $57,000 to $22,500, but the company continues to operate under these conditions.

Railway Construction—New Dry Dock.

During the year the West Coast Railway was extended 3½ miles to Parika, on the Essequibo River. The cost was approximately $17,500 per mile. The total steam railways in operation at the end of 1914 was 97½ miles, as follows: Georgetown to Rosignol, or New Amsterdam, 60½ miles; Vreed-en-Hoop to Parika, 18½ miles; and Wismar, Demerara River, to Rockstone, Essequibo River, 18½ miles. The first two are owned and operated by the Demerara Railway Co. (Ltd.) and the latter by Messrs. Sprostons (Ltd.). In addition to the above, the Demerara Electric Co. (Ltd.) owns and operates 13½ miles of electric railway in Georgetown.

A new dry dock was constructed by the Government for the use of its steamers at Mazaruni, on the Essequibo River, at a cost of about $11,000. This dock is 160 feet long, 35 feet wide, and at high tide has a depth of 15 feet. The low cost of its construction was due to the fact that an old stone quarry was used for its site and convict labor employed.

Health Conditions.

The health of the colony is slowly improving. This is due to seasons of moderate rainfall, the increased use of quinine fostered by its free distribution on estates and in schools, the campaign against ankylostomiasis, and to the better care of infants.

After many years, in each of which deaths exceeded the births, the excess of births over deaths in 1912 were 1,167; in 1913, 3,145; and in

the first nine months of 1914, 2,357. The complete returns for 1914 are not yet available.

There were no cases of yellow fever, smallpox, cholera, or plague in the colony during the year.

Exports to United States from Dutch Guiana.

The articles invoiced at the American consular agency at Paramaribo, Dutch Guiana, for the United States during 1914 were valued at $1,207,710, compared with $1,038,875 for 1913. The values were as follows:

Articles.	1913	1914	Articles.	1913	1914
Antique goods	.....	$310	Rubber	.....	$162
Bananas	$8,874	.....	Sugar	$206,540	380,938
Bolata	287,353	352,588	Tonca beans	.....	37
Coffee	88,929	108,098	Wood	4,543	10,230
Cocoa	440,086	355,347			
Gold	2,550	.....	Total	1,038,875	1,207,710

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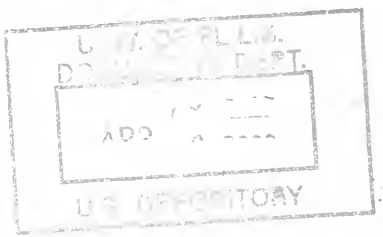
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